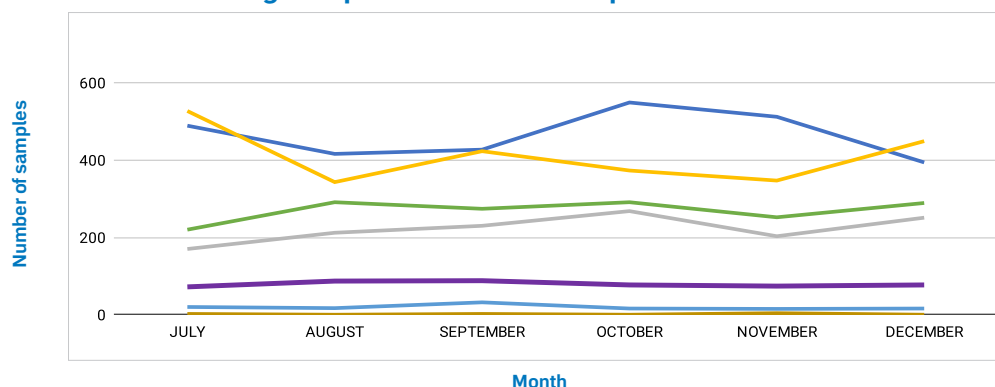


Key Findings

- In December, a total of 1,476 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region.
- An increase in the number of stimulant (primarily cocaine), and psychedelic samples was observed in comparison to the previous month, as well as a decrease in the number of opioid samples checked.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased from 29.1% to 35.5% in December (140 of 393 samples).
- Bromazepam was the most frequent benzodiazepine identified in opioid samples this month, indicating concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR. Bromazepam was found present in 14 opioid samples, followed by etizolam (3 samples).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



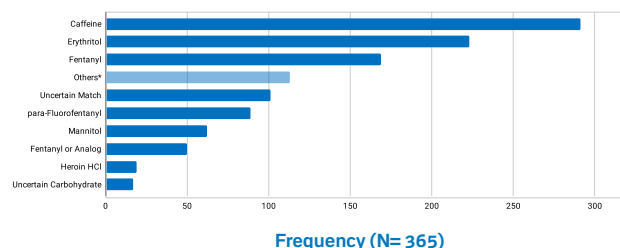
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	394
Stimulant	289
Depressant	77
Psychedelic	449
Other	16
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	251

TOTAL: 1,476

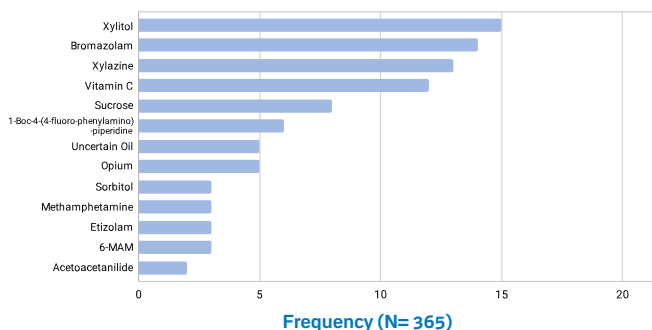
Components found in drug samples in December

Components in opioids



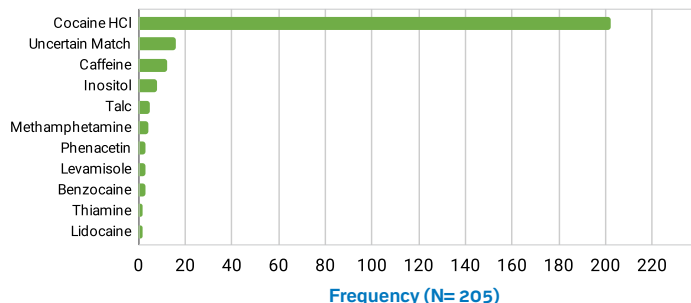
Frequency (N= 365)

Other components found in opioids



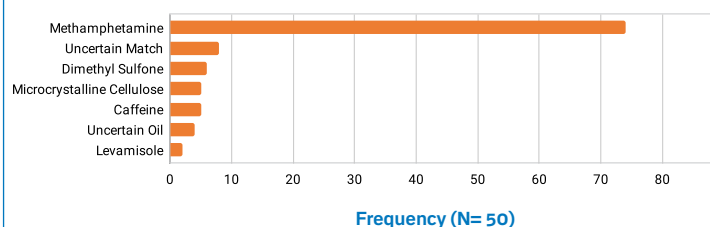
Frequency (N= 365)

Components in cocaine



Frequency (N= 205)

Components in methamphetamine



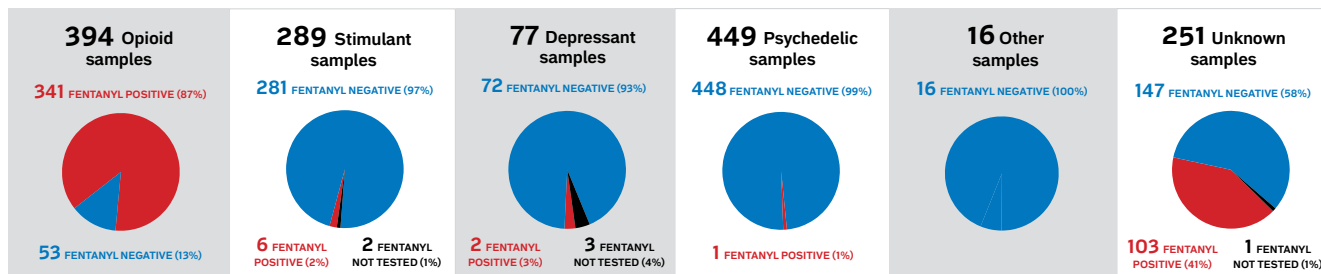
Frequency (N= 50)

There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

December
2022

Drug Checking in Vancouver Coastal

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



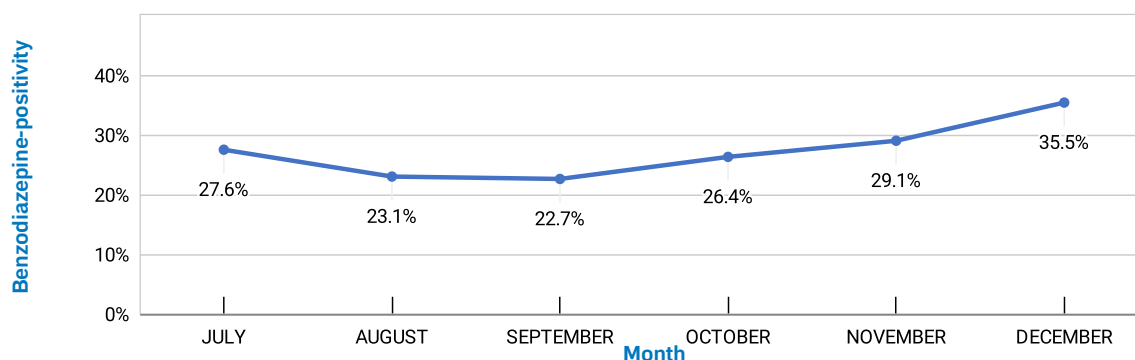
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
December 12, 2022 Vancouver	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Erythritol, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	High concentrations of fentanyl and xylazine, as well as presence of benzodiazepines, poses high risk of overdose.
December 20, 2022 Vancouver	Crack Cocaine	Erythritol, Caffeine, Fentanyl or Analogue	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Sample was sold as crack cocaine, but instead tested as benzodiazepine-positive down, presenting a high risk of overdose if consumed unknowingly.
December 20, 2022 Vancouver	Methamphetamine	Methamphetamine, Caffeine, Uncertain Match	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Sample unexpectedly tested positive for presence of fentanyl and benzodiazepines, increasing risk of overdose.

Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking. See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts.

To receive drug contamination alerts, text "alert" to (236) 999-DOPE (3673)

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months



During the month of December, **35.5%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**140 samples of 394 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

December
2022

Drug Checking in Vancouver Coastal

Number of drugs checks and hours at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	1,242
Insite	202
Molson OPS	32
Total	1,476

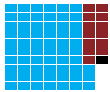
Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Depressant

77 Samples Tested



Matched: 63

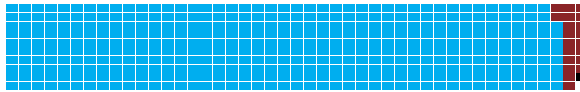
Did not match: 13

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

449 Samples Tested



Matched: 427

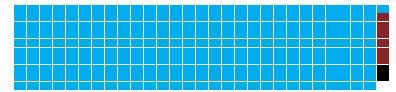
Did not match: 20

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

289 Samples Tested



Matched: 281

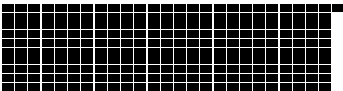
Did not match: 6

Match not determined: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

251 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 251

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

394 Samples Tested



Matched: 359

Did not match: 31

Match not determined: 4

EXPECTED DRUG:

Other

16 Samples Tested



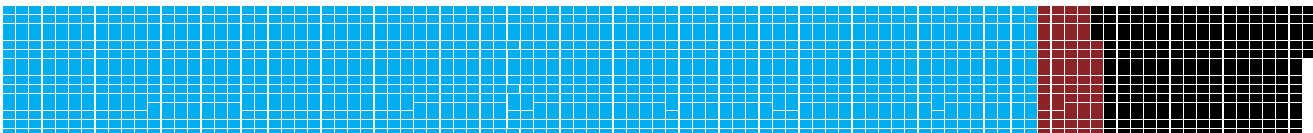
Matched: 10

Did not match: 1

Match not determined: 5

Total

1,476 Samples Tested



Matched: 1,140

Did not match: 71

Match not determined: 265

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

Depressant include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

Opioid include:
"down," heroin, fentanyl,
pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

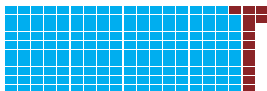



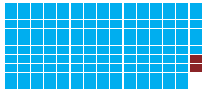


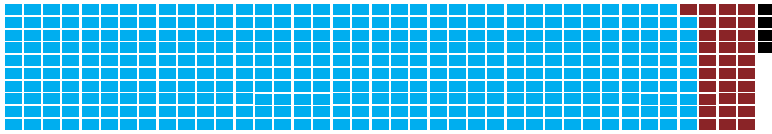
Psychedelic include:
MDMA and related,
2C-family, tryptamines,
ketamine, LSD

Stimulant include:
methamphetamine, "speed,"
cocaine and crack cocaine,
cathinones

Unknown includes:
samples where the individual
was unable to identify an
expected substance - this
includes found samples.

Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl</div> <div>192 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 179 Did not match: 13</div>	<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Heroin</div> <div>18 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 15 Did not match: 3</div>	<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl and Heroin</div> <div>1 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Did not match: 1</div>	<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Other Opioid</div> <div>2 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Did not match: 2</div>
<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Down</div> <div>148 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 146 Did not match: 2</div>	<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Pharmaceutical</div> <div>28 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 14 Did not match: 10 Match not determined: 4</div>	<div>EXPECTED DRUG: Opium</div> <div>5 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 5</div>	
<div>Total</div> <div>394 Samples Tested</div> <div></div> <div>Matched: 359 Did not match: 31 Match not determined: 4</div>			

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:

